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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [ECON](#) [EPET](#) [ODIP](#) [CU](#) [VE](#) [IR](#) [BL](#)  
SUBJECT: MORALES' LATEST BLOWS AGAINST THE EMPIRE: BOMBAST  
OR PRECURSOR?

REF: A. LA PAZ 2624  
[1](#)B. LA PAZ 2596

Classified By: A/EcoPol Chief Brian Quigley for reasons 1.4 (b)(d)

[1](#)1. (U) Bolivian President Evo Morales unleashed another round of vitriolic attacks against the United States December 23. Morales barred all but foreign and state media from the presidential press conference, underscoring his recent feud with the private media (reftels).

Morales: DEA Tried to Kill Me, Opposition Still Trying  
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[1](#)2. (U) Morales recounted a 2001 article in the magazine Opinion in which a Bolivian police officer outlined an alleged DEA plot to assassinate him. Morales relayed the policeman's account that a group of police acting under DEA orders used tire spikes to stop his vehicle in order to kill him in 2001, but failed. After the tire spikes failed to stop his vehicle, Morales said that Gustavo Torrico (now a congressman with the ruling Movement Toward Socialism party, then a fellow congressman with Morales and a Morales confidant) drove Morales through an alternate route, while being closely pursued by two unmarked cars, to the Cuban Embassy where he "managed to escape." Morales implied the United States may have colluded with the administration of then-President Jorge "Tuto" Quiroga to kill him, but said the "instructions" for organizing the plot came directly from the "north" (AKA the United States).

[1](#)3. (U) Morales said the article account provided uncanny details that led credence to the policeman's account and that, at the time, unnamed individuals advised that he leave La Paz for his own safety. Morales said intelligence services confirmed the story and told him that there were also some recent attempts to kill him by the Bolivian "ultra-right." Morales said he would provide more details about that attack and other attempts on his life at an "opportune moment" in the future.

[1](#)4. (U) Morales alleged that the opposition decided to kill him because they could not dispose of him through democratic means. "They failed to get rid of me with the (August 10

recall) referendum, they failed to get rid of me with the constitution negotiations, and now the only option they have left to get rid of me is to kill me." Due to the alleged confirmations of the recent assassination plots on his life, Morales said he would be forced to reconsider his security posture, which heretofore has allowed him to move relatively freely through the country and mingle with crowds. He added there were five additional attempts on his life when he was a coca union leader in the 80s and 90s.

#### Morales Hopes for Change with Obama

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¶5. (U) Morales explained he expelled U.S. Ambassador Philip Goldberg in September because Goldberg tried to "humiliate" him and "treated us like a cocalero mafia and cocalero Taliban." Despite such perceived mistreatment and DEA's negative history in Bolivia, including attempts to kill him, Morales contended "we need the United States." He said he hoped his administration would have better relations with the United States under incoming President Barak Obama.

#### Morales' To Do List for Obama

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¶6. (U) Morales said improved relations were possible so long as the United States "respects" Bolivia and takes responsibility "for the damage they have done to Bolivia." Morales specifically asked Obama to remove U.S. troops from Iraq and relent to wide-spread world opinion to lift the blockade on Cuba, a common Morales topic for the last two

weeks. Morales opined that lifting the embargo, which he claimed was supported by all Latin American leaders with the exception of those "linked to (U.S. President George W) Bush," would make Obama "the leader of the world." Morales also urged President Elect Obama to make undefined changes to World Bank policy and compensate Bolivia for damages and deaths during violent conflicts in 2003 he argued were caused by overly austere U.S. and World Bank policies imposed on Bolivia.

#### Morales: Even Republican Senators Are With Me

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¶7. (U) Morales asserted that unnamed U.S. Republican Senators had expressed "solidarity with Bolivia," allegedly conceding to Morales that President Bush had mismanaged affairs and that they hoped relations would improve with an Obama administration. Morales claimed the senators did not blame him for seeking warmer relations with Iran and Russia.

#### Rallying to Fight the U.S. "Empire"

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¶8. (U) Morales contended that "our grandparents were anti-imperialist fighting against the different empires and now as I've said, this new generation should fight against the North American Empire." Morales expanded his rhetorical call to arms to include capitalism, an economic model that if not changed drastically "has no future for humanity" and is wholly out of step with the indigenous movement, which seeks to live in "harmony with planet earth." Morales said he has called for a summit of world leaders in Bolivia to discuss environmental issues and, separately, said he would work with other presidents to include "public services as a (universal) human right." He repeatedly contrasted U.S. relations, which he said were "damaging" Bolivia, to Bolivia's positive relationship with Venezuela and Cuba. Morales added the decline in the price of oil was a "capitalist plot to undermine leftist governments such as Venezuela."

#### Comment: Why Now and to What End?

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¶9. (C) Morales is maintaining his incendiary anti-U.S. rhetoric with this latest barrage. We can only speculate whether he is simply upping the ante to mobilize support for

the January 25 constitutional referendum or attempting to distract attention from recent corruption investigations of key ally and Presidency Minister Juan Ramon Quintana: "They accuse us of smuggling contraband in order to impugn Evo Morales." The worst case explanation for the wave of recent attacks include Morales setting the stage for a new international initiative to take the empire down a notch or pre-justifying a new round of expulsions of U.S. government personnel or agencies. Morales could announce the latter following a Christmas Eve cabinet meeting or during New Years remarks. Morales also said he will go to Oruro Department (state) at an undisclosed date and time to express a "truth."

End Comment.

LAMBERT